



**Rep. Dade Phelan  
District 21**

**Sen. Kirk Watson  
District 14**

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Bill filed to restore key Open Meetings Act provision**

House State Affairs Chairman Dade Phelan and Senator Kirk Watson filed identical, bipartisan legislation on Wednesday to restore a key provision of the Open Meetings Act that was struck down last week by the Court of Criminal Appeals.

The Court ruled that the provision, known as the "walking quorum" prohibition, was unconstitutionally vague on its face. SB 1640 and HB 3402 address the Court's concerns by replacing vague phrases with more precise language designed to capture the same scope of prohibited activities. This language will not only address the constitutional concerns, but also it will help governmental actors better understand the boundaries of the law.

With Friday's bill-filing deadline approaching, Phelan and Watson consulted with transparency experts to quickly craft legislation to ensure the public's business will continue to be done in public.

"We simply couldn't let this ruling go unanswered," Senator Watson said. "Without some kind of walking quorum prohibition, there's nothing to stop government actors from meeting in smaller groups to avoid the spirit and intent of the Open Meetings Act."

"Texans want their elected officials to be transparent and allow honest participation in the process," Chairman Phelan said. "If we do not act this session to address this ruling, we deny them the open government they deserve."

Senate Property Tax Committee Chairman Paul Bettencourt, a joint author of the bill, added that "a well-balanced Open Meetings Act is critical to the cause of good government in the 21st century, and SB 1640 restores that for all citizens of Texas."

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